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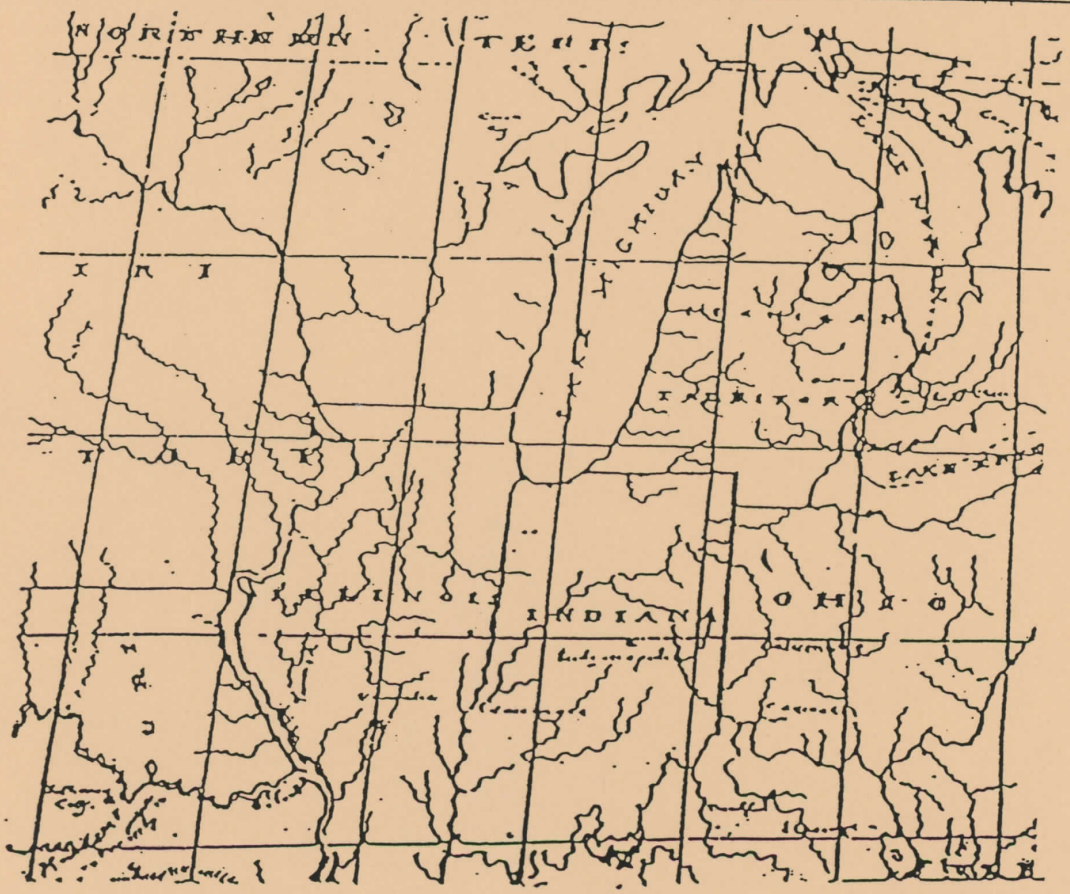

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Society for the Study of Midwestern Literature

Newsletter

Volume Twenty-Six Summer, 1996
Number One

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An Editor's Plea, Reprised

As the literary executor of the late William Thomas, I can assure you that his literary remains will provide material for the Newsletter for a number of years to come, and my files are almost as voluminous if considerably less colorful. But I do ask—request—plead—that Bill and I not remain alone or almost alone issue after issue after issue. Please send us your brief articles, essays, reviews, bibliographies, reminiscences, as regularly as you can. We especially solicit memoirs, fictionalized or not, of life and living in the Midwest, urban or rural, past or present, perhaps even as poetic narratives. We'll even consider—and probably use—the racy, as long as it isn't simply Midwestern bragging. Perhaps we'll even start a new feature called "Flamboyant Midwesterners" or "The Flamboyant Midwest," a dimension of the Newsletter that will not be for the little old lady from the Upper East or West Side.

D.D.A.

P.S. We will especially welcome a regular columnist who delights in reflecting on Midwestern life and letters in each of the three annual issues.

Notes on the forthcoming Dictionary of Midwestern Literature.

Recently the Society for the Study of Midwestern Literature signed a contract with Indiana University Press to publish the first volume of The Dictionary of Midwestern Literature. We plan to submit the completed manuscript by January 1, 1997.

This volume will contain entries on over 400 authors from the twelve Midwestern states. It will also include a forward about the Dictionary project a lead essay on the Midwest, and an essay on scholars who've won the MidAmerica Award.

At the present time 223 entries have been completed. We still have a handful of authors that we need writers for. If you are able to help us out, call General Editor Phil Greasley at 1-800-432-0963 x 73381 or e-mail him at greasle@pop.uky.edu and he will assign an author to you and send materials. We are also looking for someone to compile a bibliography of secondary sources on Midwestern literature.

We hope to involve as many members of the Society as possible in two additional volumes of the Dictionary that are projected for publication around the turn of the century. Volume II will cover Midwestern literary topics, themes, centers, and movements. Volume III will be a literary history of the Midwest. Please contact Phil by letter describing the kind of essay you would like to write for either of these volumes.

Marcia Noe

Joseph A Altsheler, The Young Trailers, and I on the Ohio Frontier

David D. Anderson

If I were to be completely honest, at the risk of having an even more unwieldy title than the one at the head of this text, it would more properly read "Joseph A. Altsheler, The Young Trailers, The Lorain Public Library, and I on the Ohio Frontier." That peculiar combination, including the Carnegie library, a prolific early twentieth century author of novels for boys, the land West of the Appalachians in the late eighteenth century, a colorful array of characters real and imagined, and the insatiable curiosity and too-fertile imagination of a pre-adolescent boy, all came together for a brief moment in the wondrous years between ten and twelve, for the boy, even as the larger world beyond knew them as 1934, 35, and 36, the years dominated by the first Roosevelt Administration, the emergence of what was, with more hope than confidence, called the New Deal, and the vivid image of a tightly-clenched jaw, a half-smile, an uptilted cigarette holder, and an air of determined optimism, an immense Blue Eagle looming in the background.

For that ten to twelve-year-old the external world was exciting enough, and he was an avid reader of the daily newspaper, aware not only of the search for order in a confused society but of the conflicts, East-- as Japan carried on its search for a "Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere" via the bayonet--and West--as Hitler's threats became movement in the Rhineland, and Mussolini preached a new Roman Empire in Africa. But as exciting as those dramatic and dangerous gestures were, that ten-to-twelve-year-old knew that somehow those foreign threats were part of his future, to be dealt with in exciting due time; more exciting for him at the time was the adventure that dominated his imagination.

Much of that adventure in the early 1930s had its inception and initial stimulation at the Lorain Public Library in Streeter Park, which occupied the square block bounded on the north and south by Tenth and Eleventh Streets and on the east by Streeter Place and on the west by Long Avenue, However, for as long as I can remember and in my mind even yet, the park was "The Library Park". In its center was a stone and brick bandstand. The library building, on the north side, was one of the many built late in the nineteenth century and early in the twentieth as the result of Andrew Carnegie's generosity with the wealth engendered by his post-Civil War steel-making empire, his sharp dealing, his Scottish Presbyterian conscience, and the sweat of thousand of workers both before and after the infamous Homestead Steel Strike of 1892.

The building was perhaps twenty-five years old when I first became aware of its true place in my life. Of fin de siecle, loosely Arts and Crafts style, architecture, its two-story exterior was of brick and sandstone in a shape that still defies logical description in my mind but that denied the utilitarian squareness of most non-residential buildings of my early 1930s acquaintanceship. It stood in a grove of mature maples on a man-made, flat

topped hillock, on a flank of which I was later to have an adventure I couldn't even imagine in the early 1930s. But that adventure may be an incident in a later story.

Inside the library its true nature became magnificently evident at once: bright, shiny oak woodwork, an open oak stairway to the second floor, the adult section, and the side rooms full of books were all lit not only by the hanging mission-style chandeliers of green stained glass and wood, but they were lit, too, by the green stained glass skylights at the top of the two-story stairwell. I don't remember either a sign or a grim librarian demanding silence, but the inner vision demanded instead a reverence that made either sign or shushing librarian superfluous. When, some twenty-five years later, the building was declared obsolete I was inspired to write my only letter to the editor of the Lorain Journal, suggesting that it become a museum. But the city fathers—and mothers, I suppose—knew better. It became the home of the city's new income tax bureau. Not incidentally, the building that replaced it looks like a factory, but it does house the Toni Morrison reading room.

Inside that magnificent building, on the first floor, in the main children's reading room, in a shelf in a corner under a window on the Streeter Place side, bathed in bright sunlight transmutted by the green stained-glass that topped the huge pane into something nearly magical, I discovered the Altsheler books, the Young Trailers, and an Ohio frontier so graphically portrayed that it became, for better or worse, the imaginative cornerstone of my life at the time, and that no matter how deeply it is buried by the debris of life in the twentieth century, gives its support even yet.

I discovered the Altsheler books-- at any given time there were perhaps ten or fifteen on the shelves out of a total of about thirty-five in six series, I later learned-- while I was, although at ten I had never heard the word, browsing for something of interest, and I thumbed through several. Almost immediately something happened, and I picked out three, the maximum I could check out for two weeks on my card. They probably were from three different series, although I have no memory of which they were. But I read them quickly and was back for more. Gradually, Altsheler's work began to sort itself out in my mind. All of the books were nondescript in appearance, all of them having apparently been issued in sturdy bindings at the time of their publication, all of them in all the series published between 1897 and 1917, and each having been rebound almost to the point of exhaustion and collapse by the time I discovered them, clear evidence, if any were needed, that, as I later discovered in Bookman for November 1918, the Altsheler books were voted by the nation's public librarians to be the most popular books for boys in their establishments.

By 1934, their appearance would certainly have discouraged a potential reader more fastidious than I, but the texts remain pristine in my memory as they were then in my imagination. Gradually, as I read them, in no particular order at first, their interrelationships became evident. There appeared to be six series of books, the French and Indian War Series, the Great West Series, the Young Trailers Series, the Texas Revolution Series, the Civil War Series, and the World War Series, the subject of which is now identified chronologically and dynastically as World War I. I didn't read all the volumes in each series, of course; some, particularly in the French and Indian War Series, the Great West Series, and the World War Series, as I remember, had somehow disappeared from the library's collection, or somehow we never made connections. But of all the series, my favorites, both of which were complete, were the Young Trailers and the Civil War series, each of eight volumes, and I read each volume at least half a dozen times. But I kept no records, and each time I came in I checked out what was available and appealed to me at the time.

Nevertheless, as haphazard as my reading might appear to be, it was evident that the six series in their entirety provided a graphic, dramatic fictional history of the American adventure from the mid-eighteenth century to the early twentieth as seen, experienced by, and shaped by Altsheler's young characters and the historical figures with whom they associated.

My fascination with the Altsheler books, particularly the Young Trailers series and the Civil War series, was perhaps inevitable, the former because the fields and woods, the lake and the river, had always stirred my imagination, and the occasional arrowhead I turned up along the river, in Cascade Park, or in freshly-turned furrows on the farm of family friends took me back in time for days on end. The latter interest had already been kindled by an old shoulder weapon that belonged to my grandfather, a percussion rifle marked CSA Richmond 1863. Although it had been rebored as a shotgun some time in the post-Civil War years, no one quite knew its history except that, oh happy rumor, it was supposed to have blown a man's leg off while he was crawling through a fence while pursuing a rabbit. The gun had long been relegated to a dusty corner of the garage, but some of my happiest days resulted from sneaking it out into the yard and crawling through the bushes in pursuit of the other guys, whoever they might be at the moment. I always got away with my adventure and I always won.

When, in The Young Trailers, the first volume of the series, as the wagons of the settlers paused and their occupants, newly come from the colony of Maryland, looked down from the crest of the mountains into "the green wilderness called by the Indians, Kain-tuck-ee," I looked down with them, and I knew that like those pioneers, I had come home, at least in my mind if not in reality, just as those in the train, including a fifteen-year-old boy named Henry Ware, knew that they, too, had come home to the wilderness of which they had heard "such strange and absorbing tales."

The season is Spring, and the year--that which marks the course of the novel--is clearly 1775; even while the settlers approach their new life in the unknown, also unknown to them was the fact that relations between the colonies in the East and the Mother Country were increasingly strained, a situation that was to shape much of the course of their lives in the West as, later that Spring, echoes of Concord and Lexington were heard even in the Wilderness.

In this first volume, published in 1907, Henry Ware and his fourteen-year-old friend Paul Cotter, Henry a natural-born woodsman, and Paul, already a visionary who sees what will be in the wilderness, join forces with their somewhat older companions, Silent Tom Ross, who had guided the settlers West, Long Jim Hart, already a seasoned scout, and Shiftless Sol Hyde, who wasn't really lazy although he certainly marched to a different drummer (my favorite of the five, incidentally) to hunt, to discover a salt lick and later a source of saltpeter for gunpowder in a cave, to scout the woods, to range to the Ohio and beyond, and to fight the Shawnees who come South of the Great River. In one skirmish Henry is captured by Black Cloud, a Shawnee who becomes his friend, and is taken far to the Northwest; in another Paul is wounded and left for dead, but both of them manage to find their ways back. In the background the settlement of Wareville, named for Henry's father, becomes a town and a strong point, an outpost of civilization in the wilderness. As the novel closes, Henry and Paul, already young men skilled in the ways of the woods, are entrusted with an important mission: to take two pack-horse loads of gunpowder, made by the Wareville people from the "cave dust" saltpeter, to a distant settlement that had exhausted its supply. They are alone in the woods, and both are totally competent, completely at home, and yet quite different. Altsheler writes:

It was beautiful, this great wilderness of Kaintuckee, and each boy saw it according to his nature. Henry, the soul of action, the boy of the keen senses and the mighty physical nature, loved it for its own sake and for what was in the present.... Henry gloried in the wilderness and loved its life which was so easy to him. Paul, the boy of thought, was always looking into the future, and already he foresaw what would come to pass in a generation. (p.328)

The first volume, The Young Trailers, is complete in itself, a tale that is at once adventurous, romantic, and rooted in historical fact as it particularizes and personalizes the great cultural conflicts that resulted from the attempts of colonial Americans to settle the land West of the Appalachians. It is quite unlike the conflicts between the French and English with each other and with the native inhabitants, a struggle on the part of Europeans for strategic control, trade, and exploitation. But the people who founded Altsheler's Wareville, like its counterparts in reality, Boonesborough, Harrodsburg, and others later, across the Ohio, had come to stay and to make the wilderness their home.

In the following seven volumes, covering the period that ended in 1780 with the defeat of the growing Indian confederation of Shawnees, Delawares, Mingos, and Wyandots, at Chillicothe and Piqua, Altsheler fuses historic fact and the adventurous romance of settlement, even as historical figures ranging from Simon Girty to George Rogers Clark to Mad Anthony Wayne to the legendary Chief Logan interact with the Young Trailers and others of Altsheler's creation, including the great fictional Wyandot Chief Timmendiquas, with whom mutual respect and admiration grow into a friendship that transcended cultural conflict.

In those seven volumes, The Forest Runners (1908), The Keepers of the Trail (1916), The Eyes of the Woods (1917), The Free Rangers (1909), The Riflemen of the Ohio (1910), The Scouts of the Valley (1911), and finally The Border Watch (1912), the boys become capable young men, Wareville flourishes as perils gradually diminish, and the War in the East gradually moves into the West, manifested in the alliance between English and Indians to keep Americans out of the West. Indian culture and historical incidents play an important part in the novels and in the lives of the young men, as they had in the lives of those who had come across the mountains.

In the course of the novels the action ranges widely, from New Orleans to Lake Superior and from the Great Plains to the Finger Lakes, as the young men follow the course of conflict and competing empires. But most of the action takes place in the Ohio Valley and increasingly to the north of it. One of my great delights in reading the novels was the recognition of places that I knew in my own northern Ohio: the Lake Erie Islands, Sandusky Bay, the Black River Valley, and the cave at the Falls of the Black River, where the young men spent part of a winter, and I, a century and a half later, dug happily for relics. But the Young Trailers cannot remain young nor can time stand still, and in the final paragraphs of the last volume, The Border Watch, Altsheler takes them into the future:

...They returned to Wareville and they fought always with distinction throughout the border wars. They were at the Blue Licks that dreadful day when...the Wyandots and Shawnees destroyed more than half of the Kentucky force...they went with Clark from the mouth of the Licking...against Piqua which had been rebuilt, and they destroyed it....

Years later they were in the terrible slaughter of St. Clair's army, and they were with Wayne when he inflicted the crushing and final defeat upon the allied tribes at

> the Fallen Timbers. After the peace all the five, every one of whom lived to a very great age, became the fast friends of Timmendiquas, famous war chief of the Wyandots, the nation that knew no fear. (p. 371)

With the end of the wars, fact, fiction, and myth fuse Altsheler's books, just as they did in my mind and imagination, and, indeed, as they still do when I drive the back roads of Ohio and Kentucky, and Altsheler's America of the late eighteenth century is still alive for me in the twentieth.

Several footnotes remain: three that fascinated me sixty years ago and do yet are evident in Altsheler's summary preface to The Border Watch, where his respect and love for his subject matter are as evident as they are in the pages of his books. First, he writes, "The conquest of the North American continent at a vast expense of life and suffering is in reality one of the world's great epics." Further, Altsheler's respect for truth is equally clear: "The author," he writes, "has sought to verify every statement that touches upon historical events. He has read or examined nearly all the books and pamphlets formerly in the Astor and Lenox, now in the New York Public Library, dealing with Indian wars and customs. In numerous cases, narratives written by observers and participants have been available." And finally, he writes, "Many of the Indian chiefs were great men. They had the minds of statesmen and generals, and they prolonged, for generations, a fight that was doomed, from the beginning...So valiant a race has always appealed to youth, at least, as a fit subject for romance."

The final footnotes belong to me. Gradually, I moved on in my readings: to Altsheler's Civil War Series, in which the two protagonists, the grandsons of Henry Ware and Paul Cotter, serve, respectively, in the Confederate and Union Armies, to the Raffles books, beginning with The Amateur Cracksman, by E.W. Horning, and to the pulps, including Doc Savage, The Shadow, Dime Western, Argosy, and dozens of others until, at sixteen, I read Winesburg, Ohio and Look Homeward, Angel, and the course of my life was changed.

Finally, a last illustration of Altsheler's impact on my life in the thirties. Sometime in the mid-thirties, perhaps as late as 1938, a man purporting to be an authentic American Indian Chief appeared in Lorain. His name was Chief Blue Sky, and he made minimally paid appearances at Boy Scout and Girl Scout troops, school assemblies, and anyplace else he could be assured of an audience and his small fee. I heard him twice; he was short and fat, and his routine each time was the same. In his Plains Indian headdress and Woods Indian fake buckskins, he began by pacing around the group, staring silently at his audience. Finally, each time he spotted a little fat boy, and he had him stand. He patted the boy's stomach and said "What you got in there?" The boy, embarrassed, invariably shrugged and blushed. "You know what?" Chief Blue Sky thundered. "I think you got papoose in there." I knew the Chief was a phony; I had read the Altsheler books, and he was no Timmendiquas.

Michigan State University

Sherwood Anderson and Hart Crane: A Temporary Friendship

David D. Anderson

Sherwood Anderson was born in Camden (population 800), Preble County, Ohio, on September 13, 1876; Hart Crane was born twenty-three years later in Garretsville (population 969), Portage County, Ohio, 250 miles northeast of Camden; Anderson was born at the end of what he was later, in Poor White to call a "time of waiting," when the nation paused before determining the course of its destiny, whether as a nation dedicated to the inward search for individual meaning and fulfillment or a nation dedicated to the pursuit of things and money in an urban industrial atmosphere; Crane was born after the die was fatally cast and an urban industrialized nation was beginning to flirt with an imperial destiny. Anderson was born in the last year of Grant's administration, that of the first of a long line of Ohio Civil War Veteran Republican Presidents; Crane in the last year of McKinley's, the last of that line.

Both Anderson and Crane wore their identities as Ohioans, as Midwesterners, proudly, neither ever attempting to shed or deny either his origins, the social and political forces that gave much of direction his life, or the family out of which he came. Although Anderson's family came almost literally out of nowhere, out of the backwater of the westward movement, and sought an elusive place in a series of Ohio towns, finally settling in Clyde, Sandusky County (population 2,380), in 1884, where Sherwood grew up in a family that barely managed to elude destitution and Crane was the only son of a family whose roots and fortune were deeply entwined with the history and fortune of Connecticut's Western Reserve in Northwest Ohio, both families were what would be called dysfunctional today. Irwin Anderson, a Civil War cavalry veteran turned harness maker as that craft was being eliminated by the mass production of factories, was a drinking man, and when he drank, he talked, thus becoming the prototype of Windy McPherson in Anderson's first published novel, Windy McPherson's Son (1916). The family which was to produce six children, two of whom achieved prominence, disintegrated when Sherwood's mother, Emma Smith Anderson, died in 1895..

Crane's family never knew the spectre of want that haunted the Anderson family a generation earlier; like many other middle-class Midwestern families of the period they were prosperous merchants on both sides; Clarence A. Crane, Hart's father, was a successful entrepreneur as well, building and then selling businesses at substantial profits to new corporate entities as the family moved to first Warren and then on to Cleveland. But Clarence Crane was jealously possessive, forcing Grace Hart Crane, Hart's mother, to give up her friends and her interest in music and singing in a tension filled house that had begun to affect Hart before he was seven. As the marriage deteriorated, he sided with his mother. When it was terminated by divorce in 1916, he became estranged from his father until they worked out a tenuous truce nearly a decade later.

Both Anderson and Crane matured early, by sixteen achieving manhood in fact if not in law as each abandoned secondary education, as did the vast majority of young men of their time, and each began to seek a place and an identity at a time when opportunities were readily available for those who were ambitious, talented, and willing to work. Anderson, known as "Jobby" in Clyde, worked at dozens of jobs throughout his youth; picking berries, peddling newspapers, and helping his father paint signs, houses, and barns were his most consistent enterprises, but by 18 he was working in the Clyde Bicycle Factory and plotting his escape to Chicago, which he managed to do after his mother's death.

Crane's middle class family, however fractured it was, found youthful labor neither necessary nor tolerable, and Hart began to write verse in Cleveland East High School, publishing a poem called "33" in Bruno's Weekly, a Greenwich Village sheet, in 1916, thus fueling his determination to go to New York and to pursue a literary career. In 1916, after his parents were divorced, he made his escape; however, it turned out to be temporary as success became an illusion, pressure from both mother and father continued, and the nation moved toward war.

Curiously, war was responsible for both young men's temporary returns to their origins. In 1895 Anderson had enlisted in Company I, Sixth Infantry Ohio National Guard before he went to Chicago, and upon the outbreak of the Spanish-American War he was quick to return to Clyde to go on active duty with his company, giving up, in the process, what the Clyde Enterprise called "a lucrative job" in Chicago, in a cold-storage apple warehouse. He served on active duty for about a year in the South and in Cuba and was discharged a corporal.

Crane returned to Cleveland in 1918 to secure his father's permission to enlist in the Army for World War I, temporarily giving up a literary career that had begun to be promising if not lucrative. But he was rejected as a minor and turned to work in a munitions plant and then at a shipyard as a riveter. Although the government dropped the draft age to 18 in 1918, he was not called and was still at home when the war ended.

As the war of each young man's generation came to a close, it appeared that each was destined to a career in commerce, Anderson because he knew of no other possibilities in spite of a growing fascination with words; Crane because he was increasingly in need of money even as he was determined to prove himself to his father. Anderson went to the Wittenberg Academy in Springfield to prepare himself for college, but in a year he was selling space and writing copy in a Chicago advertising agency; Crane worked briefly for the Plain Dealer as a reporter, and then sold advertising for the Little Review and sold and wrote for an advertising agency in New York. By late 1919, however, he became clerk in one of his father's growing chain of candy stores in Akron, Ohio, and then moved to the main office in Cleveland before going on the road selling candy-store franchises. For both Anderson and Crane, their career paths seemed clear.

But by 1913, Anderson, married with the children, president of a mail-order paint company in Elyria, Ohio, had made his break, returning to Chicago to write advertising copy for a living and to write publicly the serious fiction that he had been writing as an increasingly open secret in Elyria; it was a path that Crane's life was to parallel in less than a decade as the gap between their lives began to narrow both chronologically and geographically as well as literally.

By 1916, when Crane's first published poem appeared in Bruno's Weekly, Anderson was a committed literary artist although he remained tied to the advertising business as a means of earning a living supporting his children, and had embarked on a new marriage. He had published short fiction and essays, and in September of that year he published his first novel, Windy McPherson's Son, to good reviews, including that of Waldo Frank in the Seven Arts, which hailed the novel as evidence of Anderson's "Emerging Greatness." The stories that were to become Winesburg, Ohio had begun to appear with the publication of "Hands" in Masses, March 1916; they continued to appear in the Little Review, and in 1917 Marching Men, his second novel appeared, even as he was writing the verses that were to be collected in Mid-American Chants in 1918. In 1919, with the publication of Winesburg, Ohio Anderson was recognized by his peers if not by the book-buying public as a major contributor to a new American literature.,

Whether or not Crane read any of Anderson's stories in the Little Review, Masses, the Seven Arts, or any of the other literary journals of the period is impossible to prove, but the evidence suggests that he did. Not only did he discover the Seven Arts and the Little Review early in his aspiring poetic career in bookstores in Cleveland and New York, but he submitted verse to both, only to have it rejected, but in 1917 he had published verse in the Pagan, and in December 1917 he was saluted by Margaret Anderson as "Dear Hart Crane, poet!!" to announce her acceptance of "In Shadow" for publication in the Little Review. With that acceptance and the designation she gave him, Crane knew that there would be no turning back, although he, like Anderson, was faced with the problem of earning a living.

Even in Cleveland and Akron he made time for the life of the mind and the arts. In late summer of 1919 he discovered the newly-published Winesburg, Ohio. In his reading of it he must have experienced what would later be called an epiphany, and he wrote his immediate impressions. They appeared as a review in the September issue of the Pagan. In it he began, "Beyond an expression of intense gratitude to the author, it is hard to say a word in regard to a book such as Sherwood Anderson's Winesburg, Ohio. The entire paraphernalia of criticism is insignificant, erected against the walls of such a living monument as this book."

In spite of his conviction of the inadequacies of criticism to do justice to the book, Crane went on for five hundred words to do so, comparing it favorably with Balzac, with Masters, with Maupassant, celebrating its " flawless style" and its "significant material" that "opened the windows, alleys, and lanes of the village . . [so that we may] find what epics, tragedies, and idylls we may. . ." In conclusion, he insisted that "America should read this book on her knees. It constitutes an important chapter in the Bible of her consciousness."

Other reviews of Winesburg, Ohio ranged from perceptive and fair to harshly critical, condemning what was seen as sex obsession, but only Crane's was at once as ecstatic as it was appreciative, and Anderson, delighted, wrote to him at once:

> Some friend has sent me your review of Winesburg Ohio in the Pagan. How can I hope to express my appreciation of your generous words. Surely it is to the minds of such men as yourself the American workman in the arts must look for new fuel when his own fires burn low.
> Again I thank you for your good words.

Crane responded immediately, sending Anderson a copy of a poem, "My Grandmother's Love Letters," which he had attempted in Cleveland in 1918 and finished in New York before returning to Ohio. In his accompanying letter he talked freely to the older man of his strained personal relationship with his father, a problem not unlike Anderson's own which he finally began to resolve after his father's death in 1920. Of the poem, Anderson wrote,

> I can speak frankly because I have so little knowledge. It does not give me anything of yourself, the bone and flesh of you as a man. Your letter does that so your letter is to me the better poem. . . .

Anderson concluded, however, with a postscript: "The poem seems beautiful to me. It wants for me though the realities of you the man."

Anderson's poetic criticism was apparently of little consequence to Crane at the time; and Matthew Josephson, later editor of Broom, praised the poem, and Crane sold it to the Dial for ten dollars, his first literary sale and another milestone on his literary advance.

Perhaps more important to Crane in that and Anderson's following letters were Anderson's reaching out to the young poet in his repeated invitations to visit him in Chicago and his comments about Crane's father: "Fathers, American fathers," Anderson told him, "can't be dismissed. I wish I knew him as well as you. . ." Then he went on about the crux of the controversy, that between the businessman and the artist, a quarrel with which Anderson was extremely familiar:

> The arts he [Crane's Father] ridicules have not been very sturdy and strong among us. Our books are not much, our poetry not much yet. The battle has scarcely begun. These men are right too when they ridicule our pretension. . . .

Crane replied almost immediately, confessing to Anderson that for the first time he was deeply in love, although he didn't tell Anderson either the sex or the name of his love object. In reply, Anderson wrote again, reflecting first on his attempt to reach out in his work to others and fusing his feelings to Crane's:

> In [the Testament] I hope to express much of the vague, intangible hunger that constantly besets me, as it must you. One doesn't hunger to defeat the materialism of the world about. One hungers to find brothers buried away beneath all this roaring modern insanity of life.
>
> You in Akron, another man in California, a fellow like Fred Booth shivering in some cold room in New York.
>
> The land is indeed vast. In an odd way groups defeat growth. We must remain like seeds planted near each other in a field. No voice any of us may raise will quite carry across the spaces.
>
> It is odd how the fact of your being in a love affair vivifies you. My mind shall play with your figure at odd moments, you hungering and being defeated and arising all the time to new days.
>
> In the Testament I want to send the voices of my own out to the hidden voices in others, to do what can't be done perhaps.
>
> Write me whenever the mood hits you. I am uncertain and jerky about letters, but nevertheless I do write them, and they are the nearest approach we can have to knowing each other better now.

In this early exchange of letters, Anderson and Crane were as close as they ever would become, almost as though each was reaching out to the other and in that reaching would find a greater understanding of himself. Although the relationship rarely reached again the near intimacy of these early letters, Crane continue to send Anderson occasional poems, none of which Anderson enthused about, and he revealed his ambitions as freely as his frustrations, but not to the extent of his earlier letters. In letters to Gorham Munson and others, Crane was as ecstatic about Poor White (1921) and the Triumph of the Egg as he had been about Winesburg. In his review essay on Poor White in the Double Dealer Crane saw it as a suitable companion piece to Winesburg, Ohio, and a major contribution to the Anderson canon. Anderson was deeply appreciative, writing in November, 1920, that

> I have your fine letter about Poor White, and naturally, I am pleased to hear from you that it hit you. When a man publishes a book, there are so many stupid things said that he declares he'll never do it again. The praise is almost always worse than the criticism, but you know how to take a story naturally and simply and how to react naturally and simply. It does one good.

But then Anderson turned to Crane's personal dilemma in Cleveland, perhaps contributing in the process to Crane's determination to break with his father's business and to remain in Cleveland but devote himself to writing. He wrote in conclusion.

> Do keep pressed up against the wall and don't sink into resignation. I imagine revolution doesn't accomplish much, but constant irritation with ugliness is necessary. I may go East in January.

To Anderson , Crane was clearly one of the aspiring young writers to whom he was and would continue to be uniformly kind, even in the face of possible later rejection of him as the master, as was true of Hemingway, Fitzgerald, Faulkner, Wolfe, and a number of others. But a curious identification between Crane and Anderson is evident in Crane's letters to his friend Munson. On one occasion he wrote "[Anderson] and Josephson are opposite poles, Josephson classic, hard and glossy — Anderson, crowd-bound with a smell of the sod about him, uncouth. Somewhere between them is Hart Crane with a kind of wistful indetermination, still much puzzled". Later, again he wrote to Munson.

> . . . But when one compares [Ben Hecht's Erik Dorn] with such a book as Anderson's Triumph of the Egg, it fades out terribly. The latter is an anthology of recent short stores of Anderson and re-reading them together I get the most violent reaction. He has written of ghastly desolations which are only too evident in my own experience and on every hand. I am more enthusiastic that ever in my praise for him although I feel in an odd way, that he has, like a diver, touched bottom in a certain sense. . . .

Anderson's comments on two versions of Crane's "Black Tambourine," in which Crane, like many of his white modernist contemporaries including Anderson himself, tries to define or explore the black American experience, were doubtful,

even as Crane apparently attempted to encourage Anderson to explore the same material. Of the second version, Anderson wrote,

> It seems to me that your poem now has real charm and meaning. Still, I wonder if the American Negro is quite lost in mid-air between Africa and our stupid selves. Sometimes I think he alone is not lost. I don't know. Doesn't one have to be careful here? A figurative impulse comes that has beauty as a figure. Perhaps that is enough, but I have never found it to be enough for me. . . .
>
> Still I don't quarrel with your conception. It may be the true one, and you've got beauty into the singing of it. Remember only that the black man above all knows song physical. The tambourine cuts small figure with him. . . .

While Anderson went to France with Paul Rosenfeld and Anderson's wife, Tennessee Mitchell, in the spring and summer of 1921, Crane began to think of returning to an advertising office in Cleveland, hoping desperately to save enough money to make a final break with business and his father, perhaps saving enough even to join the exodus to Europe. By late 1921 Anderson had returned, and, determined to make his own break with advertising, the Chicago renaissance, and Tennessee Mitchell, had gone on to New Orleans, while Crane went to work at the Corday & Gross advertising office in Cleveland. When Anderson's story "The Contract", a tightly-executed story about a marital trap foreshadowing Many Marriages, appeared in Broom in December, 1921, Crane wrote Anderson that it lacked Anderson's usual beauty and intensity, that it seemed an imitation of the real thing; Anderson amiably replied that Crane was probably right, that it read better in manuscript than on the printed page.

Although neither Anderson nor Crane could have anticipated it, their two-year relationship was nearing its end, and it would end for all practical purposes on the occasion of their first meeting, a few months later, although it would drag on for another month after their meeting. Anderson, torn between his need for money and his recent resignation from his advertising job, between his need to find a new direction and a new place and to free himself from a marriage that had become oppressive, began to move slowly from Chicago to New York, visiting his old places—Clyde, Elyria, Cleveland—on the way. In late July, in Cleveland , he called Crane; they arranged a dinner meeting, which apparently went well, with the chief topic of conversation Crane's efforts to secure a German translation of Anderson's work. Then they adjourned to Crane's home, where Anderson was to meet Gorham Munson, Crane's friend who was visiting from New York, Crane's mother, and his grandmother. Of most importance, Crane planned to have Anderson look at paintings by two Clevelanders whom he had come to know, William Sommer, a fifty-year-old- Ohioan who had become his friend, and William Lescaze, a Swiss-French artist living in Cleveland who would later become a well-known architect. Crane was especially hopeful that Anderson would promote Sommer's work in New York.

For the remainder of the evening, Munson became the chief, admittedly biased witness, although evidence of what happened, including some corroborating evidence, is clear in both Crane's and Anderson's later letters. According to Munson, Anderson seemed interested in the paintings but his comments were trivial and pretentious. Munson admitted to having had doubt

about the worth of Anderson's fiction, and his own words suggest that he was looking for an argument, that perhaps he was jealous of Anderson. When Anderson spoke highly of his friend Paul Rosenfeld as a critic, Munson said he didn't think much of him. Crane's biographer, John Unterecker, describes what happened as described by Munson:

> . . . Anderson flared. "You must be a colossal egotist," Anderson said. Munson , angry, stuck to his guns. The more they talked, the more upset they became. Soon Waldo Frank's name entered the argument, Anderson having sided with Rosenfeld in an attack on Waldo Frank's Dark Mother.
>
> Crane, meanwhile, was hard at work trying to keep the evening he had so long looked forward to from degenerating into a brawl. At last he got all tempers tentatively under control. "We did finally recover from the spat," Munson remembered, "though not very much. Crane was a little distressed, and Anderson was quite mad."

The party broke up early. It was to be the last meeting as well as the first between Anderson and Crane; although Anderson stayed in Cleveland for several more days, they did not meet again. Just before he left town, Anderson wrote Crane a short note:

> I'm indeed sorry that this note will reach you after I'm gone. The only thing I regret about my conversation with your friend was my own stupidity in being drawn into a literary argument. It is the sort of thing I like least in the world but do not blame him. It was my own affair to stay out of it. . . .
>
> I'm sorry I have not seen more of your but unfortunately I came to Cleveland in a rather tired bedeviled mood That has led me to hunt solitude for the time. Really I am, ordinarily a much more social being.

Nevertheless, Anderson offered to show Sommer's paintings to his New York friends, especially Rosenfeld, if Crane would forward them to him, and Crane, apparently against his better judgement did so, writing Gorham that "I sent 27 Sommer things off to Anderson last Saturday, feeling very much as though I were delivering Plato into the hands of the Philistine". Then, curiously, "I have been shocked, sensation very rare with me, with the contents of your letter regarding his maneuvers." This was apparently a reference to an alleged denunciation of Munson by Anderson in the Dial office, for which no corroborating evidence exists.

Reaction to Sommers work in New York was less than enthusiastic and Anderson duly reported that fact to Crane, commenting that "I'm really sorry I went into this. . . . I hate having anything to do with any unfavorable judgment on any man's work. Do understand I only acted as your agent in this".

That was Anderson's last letter to Crane. Crane, furious, blaming Anderson and Rosenfeld for what he termed a "betrayal" of Sommers, did not deign to reply. Although he wrote to another friend that "he [Anderson] hasn't destroyed my taste for some of his work yet—despite that most of my friends don't value his work above a Russian rouble", whatever remained of their literary relationship was over. Crane had another decade to live and Anderson two and Crane's best work was still ahead of him as Anderson's best was largely behind him. Crane

commented almost wistfully on one or two later occasions on what had once, however briefly, occurred between them. But the relationship of these two moderns, both who came out of nineteenth-century Ohio to give a measure of direction to American writing in the twentieth century, was over.

Michigan State University

Ex Catherdra, Part II

William Thomas

XVI

From a publisher: "I have held your manuscript for some time because it is a perfectly charming book and I have had a number of readings on it. It seems awful to say of a good book that it is too quiet for today's market, but unfortunately, that is the consensus here, and I must concur . . . . So, regretfully, I am obliged to decline. . . .'

XVII

From an agent (about a different piece of composition): "The writing is far above average but the narrative lacks unity and/or a clearly defined plot. In dealing with so many characters there must be a common thread that weaves their lives together to form a total relationship . You novel does not emerge as a whole; rather, there are bits and pieces of lives that, in the final analysis, are not directly related one to another."

No comment is more apropos that James quoting Turgenev: "'the vain critic's quarrel, so often, with one's subject, when he hasn't' the wit to accept it'". (preface to The Portrait of a Lady.)

XVIII

"Do you read them?" she asks, curious about the many books I receive in the mail. I don't try to explain that having a 24-volume set of Scott doesn't put one under obligation to read Count Robert of Paris or Peveril of the Peak. I don't know a more final word on the subject that John Hill Burton's: "That one should possess no books beyond his power of perusal—that he should buy no faster than as he can read straight through what books he has already bought—is a supposition alike preposterous and unreasonable." (The Book-Hunter, 70.)

XIX

Not advertising only but much editorial content of periodicals implies that the ne plus ultra of personal satisfaction is to be had from dwelling in a beautiful house furnished with beautiful objects. We are no more likely to derive satisfaction thus than were Europeans of the 19th century, or the 18th , or the 15th.

Technology has provided comfort for everybody, and has virtually made domestic service obsolete. 20th-century architecture, though it lags deplorably in house planning, has justified itself and may in time make general the construction of admirable houses. But that aspiring to live conveniently, possess objects of art, or sit in chairs upholstered with especially fine fabrics is noble—that presupposition epitomizes the materialistic outlook of our century.

XX

Domestic architecture, despite this century's revolution, remains the most backward branch of the art. The planning of a house, either because of the architect's temperament or because of his client's requirements, is yet oftenest done from the outside in, whereas it should be from the inside out. Instead of thinking: I want a ranch type or a Georgian house, one should say: I want this room to serve such a purpose; therefore it should have fourteen feet of unbroken wall space for a sofa (or a sideboard, or a bed and stand); it should have windows at corners, because windows midway or symmetrically in the walls not only hamper the arrangement of furniture but leave the corners dark; this space between the window and the door must be right for a chest of drawers (or a chair and a reading lamp). The ideal house is not one you *arrange* furniture in but one build around a furniture arrangement.

Such a mode of planning (which has the advantage of discouraging women's propensity for shifting things about) is not set forth as a profound or novel idea, for German architects were designing and German builders were constructing "modern" houses within the first years of this century. To verify this statement requires merely to look at the dated photographs in Platz's Die Baukunst der neuesten Zeit and similar works. (In this country Wright had fixed his direction too.) These earliest examples of the "new" architecture are not by any means so good as those of the 1920s; that is because the designers had only begun to free themselves from tradition. When, a decade after they were perfected in Germany and Scandinavia, the new forms had become well known in this country, American architects equaled these European models. But we, as a house-dwelling folk, continue for the most part to erect 19th-century houses that are as non-functional as the University of Chicago's pseudo-Gothic edifices or the Greek temples in the city of Washington.

XXI

Either misguided romanticism or plain nonsense prompts many dwellers in urban communities, near abundantly stocked supermarkets, to continue the practices of their rural ancestors only slightly modified. They labor with garden tractors and squirrel away vegetables, fruits, and quarters of beef in food lockers, ignoring the arithmetic of equipment amortization and maintenance and very pleased with their frugality.

XXII

The best men are cooks. A man ought to be proficient in the kitchen. He ought to be able to produce a tasty and wholesome meal. A man, more

consistently that a woman, coordinates his efforts so that they culminate opportunely; nothing is missing and nothing has been a while cooling when the steak is ready to come off the broiler. A man keeps cleaning up after himself, so far as possible, as he goes; a woman leaves a utensil she is finished with in any spot that will contain it, and, though she could use the same one more than once during a preparation, never does.

You can't always tell whether a man works in a kitchen, but you can always be sure when he doesn't. Only a woman puts up with dull knives.

XXIII

To possess manual skill is doubtless commendable, but if exercise of that skill takes time away from intellectual pursuits such dexterity is not a boon. Maugham's idea was right: never do anything for yourself that you can get somebody to do for you. (The Summing Up, 153.) If I had the privilege of choosing again, I'd never install an electricity outlet, never touch a saw or a paint brush, never drive a nail or a screw. But you have to stand firmly on the principle—make a single exception, and you're liable to a dozen commitments.

XXIV

On the pretext of filling human needs or developing divers capabilities, many a man fritters away precious hours of intellectual life. Furniture finishing, photography, gardening (Emerson had his say on that, in The Conduct of Life, "Wealth"), playing cards or chess—these are delusions and snares. When a man has a mind, he should put it to its proper use. It is impossible to over-use the intellect. Quite enough diversity of subject matter exists to relieve it of over-concentration.

XXV

I said: Freedom of religion includes freedom to reject religion; you are not allowing me freedom if you demand that I choose among forms of worship; I choose not to worship. I will not be shamed or coerced into professing a belief that I do not hold.

XXVI

Though I don't believe in immortality, I don't leave off living civilly with those who do.

XXVII

The word music, like poetry, is honorific. The most vulgar of instruments for making what is miscalled music is the steel guitar. Next to that is the accordion.

XXVIII

One of the most-quoted passages from John Henry Newman is that about sailors who "range from one end of the earth to another" observing nothing. Newman's turgid sentence (in The Idea of a University, Part I, Discourse VI; "Knowledge Viewed in Relation to Learning"), clogged in the middle with latinate diction, escapes into a good metaphor; "they see the tapestry of human life, as it were on the wrong side, and it tells no story".

Likewise, farmers, who are in the way of experiencing closer communion with the natural world than men of other vocations, are, in any philosophical sense, oblivious to nature and its phenomena. Their inordinate concern with the weather is severely practical; they despoil their farmsteads of all natural attractiveness by tolerating the accumulation of junk. The wrong side of the tapestry tells them no story.

XXIX

My friend and I agreed that a discouraging fact to one who would believe man a reasoning animal is that supposedly intelligent, educated, reasonable people so often exhibit in controversy the same illogic, the same disregard for evidence, the same disposition to prejudice, the same purely emotional reactions as are displayed by the ignorant.

XXX

Thirty to thirty-five years after, when the person concerned has long forgotten or is dead—I am overcome with shame and regret at the recollection of a rudeness committed so long ago.

XXXI

People's opinions and judgments of a person are more readily formed and made firmer by what discredits him than by what credits him. However great his competence, his transgressions, be they but peccadillos, are ultimately his measure.

XXXII

The great and overwhelming obstacle to personal happiness, to which no other is comparable in the sum of its effect, is the inescapable necessity to earn money.

XXXIII

In order to make himself sufficient to her X learned to dance. Then they separated, and that was a lost labor. I think of Maugham's anecdote of the man who accustomed himself to shallow entertainment and pretended interest in theater folk so that a woman should be pleased with him. Thirty years later he had

long been tried by her triviality and stupidity and was ashamed of having done it. (A Writer's Notebook, 261.) X was more fortunate. He got all he could stand and freed himself within a few months.

LIV

Every oncoming age group insensibly assumes that all life and experience gone before it culminates in it (as at any given moment they do). The individual must come to his middle years before he sees himself as belonging to historic time.

LV

Henry, suppose the faraway music you stepped to led you into an impasse; that all those avenues you might have taken are long grown over because you went by them in time; you have matured but gained no wise in going so; your spring has turned from summer into fall, and ahead lies only dreary and lonely winter.

That is the price one may pay who hears a different drummer.

LVI

Lowes says it thus: You do a foolish or an evil deed and its results come home to you. And they are apt to fall on others too. You repent, and a load is lifted from your soul. But you have not thereby escaped your deed. You attain forgiveness, but cause and effect work on unmoved, and life to the end may be the continued reaping of the repented deed's results. That is not a system of ethics; it is the inexorable law of life, that which nothing is surer or more unchanging. (The Road to Xanadu, 298.)

LVII

Max Eblin. At an age when I enjoyed long motor trips I made many, and sometime drove the whole distance (a few miles less than a thousand) from Scioto Farm to Wichita without having to look at a road map. On Ohio State Route 4 between Marysville and Springfield was a big red barn, and above its front doors, in big block letters made of wood strips, was the name "Max Eblin". The gray-painted strips contrasted nicely with the bright red siding.

I never had reason to think of Max Eblin when I was not traveling Route 4, but the epigraphic quality of the name and the succinct brevity of its three syllables kept it always at the threshold of recall. At once Max Eblin's barn came to be a marker of the journey. When I passed it going westward, I knew I was well on my way, and coming eastward I could assure myself I was nearing home.

Year by year the red siding lost its luster, and sections of the letters that made up Max's name fell off. There came a time when I could not have read "Max Eblin" had I not held it entire in my memory, and at last I could no longer distinguish Max's barn from a dozen others on the road.

I built up fantasies about Max Eblin. I thought of him as a young, ambitious farmer, glorying in his youth and strength, loving, courting, marrying, begetting

children, seeing them grow up and leave. I thought of age overtaking him along with the barn, of the parallel disintegration of the man and the symbol, of his final defeat by death as the barn fell into decay. A couple of times I tried to shape my imaginings into the story of Max Eblin's life. But I was not successful. Perhaps that was because years had passed over my head too, and I found no good reason to particularise in him the universal experience. This is as near as I have come to writing it.

LVIII

I was eighteen years old, worked for the Electric Company, and knew the city thoroughly. There was one house in it (and no more than one other) that truly had character. It was on a corner lot but you couldn't see it from either street. There was an iron fence, with stone posts at the front gate. Behind the fence, shrubbery was impenetrable to sight. I saw the house, and was in it, once—before the electricity meter was moved to a pole by the sidewalk.

It had an aspect of genteel neglect, and its limestone block walls and seven chimneys were mellowed by the rains and suns of half a century. On that day, Brightwood Durfee stood in front of the fireplace in his library, with a big dog, a boxer or a Dane. That was a sight to intensify the yearning in my youthful soul, and many times later I'd have settled with life for such a house and such a lovely room.

So it remained twenty years longer. Then the property came into the hands of a fool, who ripped out the shrubbery, knocked down the fence, and sandblasted the house. When I saw it, I felt like weeping.

LIX

The questions that must some time present itself to everyone and must remain forever unanswerable: Why am I, the ego, confined throughout all my years to the body I inhabit from birth? And this inevitably leads to: Such being a fact, does my ego cease to exist with the cessation of physical life? And then: If it does not, and I am to inhabit a new body, I must logically have inhabited another body earlier. To ask where was the beginning is like asking what supports the world: an elephant supported by an elephant—"elephants all the way down". Socrates didn't get nearer to answering the question in Phaedo.

LX

More strongly than ever, I feel a compulsion toward order. I use the word in the sense of life-controlling discipline. Order in one's personal life is achieved by subjecting his conduct to the governancy of reason. Gratification of the senses is not in itself bad, but to be ruled by one's passions is.

These Elisabethan ideas are apt and applicable in times so similar in temper to those they flourished in.

LXI

It is a mistake to believe that human life or living is stable or that absolute stability can be achieved. All human actions entail varying degrees of risk. Relative success attends one best equipped to calculate the risk.

LXII

Life is constantly making demands on one, and oftentimes they seem unendurable. Nevertheless we always do what we have to do.

LXIII

Conflicts are almost never resolved. That is, never settled in a way that can be accepted as constituting a satisfactory means of dealing with a problem. Ultimately they disappear, being superseded by other conflicts, which yield in turn. The fact to be noted is that life is never free of conflict, and cannot be made so. The individual, therefore, must intellectualize his conflicts and live with them.

LXIV

Talk about creativity is well-meaning and does no harm. The rub is that every field of creative endeavor must reckon with the role of the entrepreneur, whose purporting to justify his decisions in the name of the public that supports him is an incontrovertible argument against risk-taking. As often as not, he is incapable of recognizing the product of creativity as genuinely original and worthy of dissemination. The more original it is, the less likely he is to regard it with favor. Though mere deviation from precedent is not ipso facto creation, what is truly creative is likely to be very different from what the mind is conditioned to receive. The entrepreneur's reluctance to disseminate it gives it little chance to reach the audience who would accept it.

LXV

"Training" people to do one thing and another always goes on, even (maybe especially) in literate environments. Some educators resist the word, because it calls up associations of circus animals, they substitute preparing. One may think the difference negligible. There comes a time when he doesn't wish to reach out in new directions, or to explore the old paths farther; when life promises to be satisfying and fruitful only by his allowing himself to be what he is. Olds puts it, "an age comes when it is more important to assert oneself than to educate oneself". (Journals, III 303.) Gissing says it less well: *"The Time* for acquisition has gone by." (The Private Papers of Henry Ryecroft, 267.) Hazlitt gives it a turn: "Those people who are always improving, never become great." (Characteristics, CCXCIII; also in "On Novelty and Familiarity", in The Plain Speaker.)

LXVI

We are not satisfied with the life we have in ourselves and in our own being: we insist on living a make-believe life in the sight of others, and we strive to seem what we are not. We labor incessantly to embellish and maintain our fictitious being, and ignore the true. And if we have either tranquility, or nobility, or fidelity, we are zealous to let it be known, in order to attach these qualities to our other being, and would detach them from ourselves to join them to the other; we would willingly be poltroons to win the reputation of being bold felllows. It is a sure sign of the nothingness of our being, not to be satisfied with the one without the other, and often to exchange the one for the other!

There are many ways of saying it. That is Pascal's. It is Pensee 147.

LXVII

As Gide's Lafcadio says (in Les Caves du Vatican), "Life's like fresco-painting--erasures aren't allowed". When a man is experienced enough to profit by experience, he is too old to benefit from the gain. Every man, says Hazlitt, "finds out what he ought to have done, when it is too late to do it". (Characteristics, CCXCIX.)

LXVIII

The way in which I would significantly change the conduct of my life over the last thirty-five years is toward greater devotion to what has been called the inner logic. I am convinced that graver misfortune derives from concessions to practical necessity when the inner logic opposes them than from the inconveniences and deprivations attendant on following one's own bent.

LXIX

One of the hardest things a man has to do is keep on believing in himself when his efforts, regularly and over many years, have resulted only in failure. If at last he does win out and achieve a modicum of success at what he wants to do, he was right all the time. If that never comes to pass, the world judges him—and properly, for all anyone knows to the contrary—a fool.

LXX

Most acomplishment is unspectacular. Most often it shows itself in a series of small successes. Thereafter the going becomes easier, and you act with a certain assurance that comes of knowing your self-confidence is justified. But you can never fix on a time when the gap is actually closing. You only observe afterward that it was.

LXXI

No trend is irreversable Whatever difficulties beset one, or however deplorable one's condition, a change toward betterment can be effected. It will not

of itself take place. Positive action is required. Though the road back may appear long and arduous, recovery once instituted is quickly felt. Since one has all the time there is, the length of time necessary to its completion is inmaterial. If it takes the remainder of one's life, that is better than submission to further deterioration. One should never submit.

Ohio State University/Marion
Emeritus

BILLBOARD

Please post.

"Mennonite/s Writing in the United States"

At Goshen College
October 23-26, 1997

Call for Papers

Submit proposals to the English Department, Goshen College, Goshen, Indiana 46526 or fax (219) 535-7293 or e-mail "ervinb@goshen.edu"

By April 1, 1997

We welcome proposals for 20-minute presentations:

- Papers interpreting literary works
- Readings from original poetry, fiction, drama
- Performances of dramatic scenes or literary texts set to music
- Papers discussing theoretical issues
- Papers or panel discussions on:
  - publishing Mennonite literature
  - teaching Mennonite literature in high school and college
  - research opportunities in Mennonite literature

Although we especially welcome papers on currently active, published U.S. Mennonite writers, we will also consider presentations on journals, diaries, autobiographies, oral literature and popular fiction and poetry by and about U.S. Mennonites (including Amish and Hutterites).

Conference publications:

1. Some of the conference papers will be published in *The Mennonite Quarterly Review.*
2. Pinchpenny Press will publish a chapbook anthology of writings by conference participants, available for sale at the conference. Submit poems or pieces of very short prose by April 1, 1997.
3. Pinchpenny Press also offers to publish several chapbooks by hitherto unpublished authors attending the conference. Manuscripts must be approved by the Pinchpenny editorial board and authors must pay all publication costs. For instructions on how to submit a prospectus, write to the Goshen College English Department. Manuscripts are due April 1, 1997.

Other information:

- A keynote speaker of national reputation will open the conference on Thursday night.
- Travel subsidies for groups of students from Mennonite colleges will be available.
- Dormitory rooms will be provided for students; others must make their own arrangements.
- A second announcement, with detailed program and full details about registration, will be mailed by June 1997. We welcome additional names for the mailing list.

Conference: **Cross-Cultural Poetics**
Dates: October 16-19, 1997

Despite artificial disciplinary barriers, ethnographers & poets have in recent years come to realize how similar their projects are. **Cross-Cultural Poetics** seeks to address the increasingly untenable boundaries between poetic & ethnographic practices. The conference will focus on the role of poetry in the on-going discourses of multiculturalism, ethnography, and literary theory and practice. While recent years have seen a debate in "how culture is written (about)" and most of these debates make extensive use of the term "poetics," poetic discourse itself has not been foregrounded as a significant measure and critique-mechanism in the matrix of cultural writings. Construing the term "poetry" fairly broadly, we invite poets and scholars working in a broad range of fields -- anthropology, urban studies, ethnic studies, folklore, literature and literary theory, sociology, history, publishing, film, American studies, performance studies, ethnomusicology, cultural studies, etc. -- to propose readings, papers or panels that address one or more of the following areas:

- Comparative Poetries &/or Poetic Traditions
- Oral/Literate Interfaces or Standoffs
- Anthropological Methodologies Applied to Poetic Texts, Communities, Events, or Individual Poems or Poets
- Ethnography as Poetry/Poetry as Ethnography
- Ethnic, Folkloric & Vernacular Poetries
- Poetry as Cultural & Social Praxis
- Poetry as Cultural & Social Critique
- Constituting Communities through Poetic Activity
- Poetry as Mass Culture
- Poetry & the Public Sphere
- The Anthropology of Writing & the Writing of Anthropology
- Representing Self/Other
- Issues in Cultural Translation
- "Ethnopoetics": Reappraisals?
- Poetry & Other Media (Song Lyrics, Music, Film, Movement, Visual Arts, etc.)
- Close Readings of &/or Listenings to Ethnographic Documents
- The Poetics of Thick Description
- Ritual, Play, etc. as Elements in Poetic Composition
- The Act of Inscription: Fieldnotes, Notebooks, etc.
- The Cultural Migration of Texts
- Hybridization of Genres & Traditions

PAPERS, WRITING SAMPLES (FOR POETS WANTING TO READ) AND PANEL PROPOSALS (a 1-2-page abstract) should be sent by March 15, 1997 to Maria Damon, English Dept., 207 Lind Hall, University of Minnesota, Minneapolis MN 55455.

The Booker Prize:

Books, Business and "Britishness"

This session of English III: English Literature after 1900 will focus on the Booker McConnell Prize for Fiction and its cultural, economic, and political impact on British literature. Financed by Booker McConnell, a multinational conglomerate and begun in 1969 as a way to promote British fiction internationally, the Booker Prize has itself drawn criticism for, among other things, perpetuating British imperialist ideologies while ignoring the work of marginalized authors. Proposals are invited on:

- individual novels that have been awarded the prize
- controversies surrounding particular award winners
- the effect of the award on book sales and promotion

Please direct all inquiries to Julia Williams, Session Chair, Humanities Department, Rose-Hulman Institute of Technology, Terre Haute, IN 47803. 812.877.8186 <julia.williams@rose-hulman.edu>

English III: English Literature after 1900

Call for Papers

On the 40th anniversary of Warren's Pulitzer Prize-winning *Promises*, the Robert Penn Warren Circle invites proposals for two conferences:

Bowling Green, Kentucky:
April 25-27, 1997:

Joint meeting of the Robert Penn Warren Circle and the Center for Robert Penn Warren Studies.

Program focus:
Robert Penn Warren and Literary Theory

} *The Circle again joins the Center for Warren Studies at Western Kentucky University. Graduate student papers on any aspect of Warren's work especially welcome. There will be three chaired sessions and a roundtable discussion.*

Baltimore, MD:
May 22-25, 1997:

American Literature Association Convention.

Program focus:
Promises: The Legacy of Robert Penn Warren

{ *One chaired session; three 20-minute papers accepted.*

Deadline for completed papers (both programs), **January 1, 1997.**
Send three copies to the Program Chair, Prof. Lucy Ferriss, Hamilton College, Clinton, NY 13323; email lferriss@hamilton.edu

*****CALL FOR PAPERS*****

for a collection of essays on the works of

DOROTHY PARKER

****

Editor seeks essays on the poetry, fiction, plays, book reviews, drama reviews, essays, life, or critical reception of Dorothy Parker. I am particularly interested in essays that discuss 1) new (as in unique or innovative) critical approaches to Parker's work; 2) methods of or experiences with teaching Parker; and 3) Parker's location in the modernist literary landscape. Responses to the film, Mrs. Parker and the Vicious Circle, will also be considered.

Send completed paper or 3-page prospectus with estimated completion date, or address inquiries to:

Dr. Rhonda Pettit
Department of English
Xavier University
3800 Victory Parkway
Cincinnati, Ohio 45207

e-mail: pettit@xavier.xu.edu

DEADLINE: June 2, 1997

M/MLA: 1997 Science and Literature Section

Call for Papers

Chicago—November 6-8, 1997

Slings and Arrows: Unquiet at the Interdisciplinary Front

Just when we thought C.P. Snow's division of the intellectual world into two opposing cultures was an exaggeration, renewed carping between literary critics and scientists seems to have reopened a chasm. Unprecedented border crossings generated by interdisciplinary studies of science has raised hackles and raised questions. Scientists commenting on literary critics complain that they misunderstand and misrepresent science and that they speak gibberish. Literary critics describe scientists as rigidly and naively clinging to a faith in objective truth. What is the source of this animosity? Where will it lead? I'd like to examine the nature of current studies in the field of science and literature by looking at the nature of the two fields, professional science and literary critique, and the nature of their intersection. Some possible questions we could ask include:

- What knowledge or training is necessary for a critique of science or for a comparative discussion? What specialized knowledge is needed for reading literary theory?
- Is there a pattern in the way creative works or literary criticism depict science or scientists that explains scientists' defensiveness?
- Can we use scientific theories metaphorically? Do literary theories have implications for the reading of science?
- Have some literary critics stretched the meaning of the science they use too far?
- Does the interpretation of science legitimately change when science leaves the lab?
- How does the language of literary criticism differ from the language of science?
- How do the professions of science and/or literary studies appear from the outside? The inside?
- What is the future of interdisciplinary studies in the field of science and literature?

Questions? Call Gwen Ericson at (314) 296-5848 or (314) 977-3010, send e-mail to ericsong@sluvca.slu.edu, or regular mail to Gwen Ericson, English Department, Saint Louis University, 221 N. Grand Blvd., St. Louis, MO 63103.

One- or two-page proposals are welcome. The deadline for consideration is March 25, 1997. Finished papers (8 pages, single-spaced) due by August 29, 1997.

PLEASE POST

MIDWEST MODERN LANGUAGE ASSOCIATION
ANNUAL CONVENTION
November 6-8, 1997
Chicago, Illinois

CALL FOR PAPERS

SECTION: WOMEN IN LITERATURE

Sites of Memory in Women's Autobiographical Narratives

This session explores women's negotiations of subjectivities through space- and place-claiming gestures in autobiographical narratives.

Questions to consider include the following:
In what ways are cultural constructions of space and place represented and/or challenged?
How does a sense of place trigger memory and imagination?
How do women "place" themselves in spaces which are mediated by gender, sexuality, ethnicity, and class?
In what ways do these writers use language and narrative strategies to construct a sense of place or to address how place shapes identity?

1-2 page abstracts due by March 25, 1997

Please send to:Lisa Fry
English Department
Loyola University of Chicago
6525 North Sheridan Road
Chicago, IL 60626
e-mail: lfry@orion.it.luc.edu

Call for Papers

Teaching Writing in College
Midwest Modern Language Association
November 6-8, 1997
Ramada Congress Hotel
Chicago, IL

Session Title: Alternatives In/To Composition: Upgrading, Revising, Outsourcing

Over the last 15 years or so, the advent of personal computing and the rise of the Internet have altered the demands on college writing programs, which have traditionally been the territory of English departments. Additionally, new views of literacy acquisition have altered the ways in which college writing program administrators and instructors attempt to meet the demands—both old and new—placed upon them. Some colleges and universities—Illinois Institute of Technology and the University at Albany, SUNY, for example—are considering eliminating, or have eliminated the mandatory first-year composition course as a discreet entity. It has been replaced with writing-across-the-curriculum programs, or other programs which usually take a more integrative approach to helping undergraduates acquire academic literacy. Other schools have maintained the "freshman" course, but have revised its (essay-oriented) focus, or its structure to incorporate non-traditional goals and methods—for example, creating a virtual "chat-room" through the use of Daedalus™ conferencing software.

Papers for this session might propose, defend, explain, critique, evaluate (etc.) alternatives—either within or outside the composition course structure—to first-year writing instruction, . And such alternatives could be needs, goals, methods, structures, programs, etc.

Submission deadline: April 15, 1997, to:

Greg Pulliam
Department of Humanities
Illinois Institute of Technology
3101 South Dearborn
Chicago, IL 60616

(312) 567-7968
(708) 848-7005

gpulliam@charlie.iit.edu

BIBLIOGRAPHY AND THE CANON

CAN KEEPING TRACK OF BOOKS SHAPE THE "GREAT LIST?"

How do bibliographers and the practice of bibliography interact with the forming of the canon? Can the work of bibliographers affect the canonical status of a writer? As the canon expands, what are new territories for bibliography?

The Bibliography Section of the Midwest Modern Language Association invites papers on these and other related questions having to do with bibliography and the canon for the November, 1997 session. Papers may be theoretical or may discuss a specific bibliographer, bibliography, method or task. Studies of new horizons or of how the presence, absence or compiling of bibliographical data has shaped or could shape the canon are especially welcome.

Send papers or abstracts to:

Virginia T. Bemis
Department of English
Ashland University
Ashland, OH 44805
(419) 289-5120
vbemis@ashland.edu

Call for Papers for Edited Book Collection

Native American Literature and the Environment

Thomas Dean and George Cornell seek essay proposals for *Native American Literature and the Environment*, a book collection of edited essays focusing on how relationships with the natural environment inform and are expressed in literature by Native American writers. A variety of approaches and authors is encouraged, though the editors will be looking especially for essays that demonstrate sensitivity to the realities of Native American history and cultures. Three university presses have expressed interest in this project.

Please send proposals and short vitae by November 15, 1996 to either editor:

Thomas Dean
Department of American Thought and Language
Ernst Bessey Hall
Michigan State University
East Lansing MI 48824
E-mail: deanth@pilot.msu.edu

George Cornell
Director, Native American Institute
Owen Graduate Hall
Michigan State University
East Lansing MI 48824

MICHIGAN WOMEN'S STUDIES ASSOCIATION

Silver Anniversary

25th Annual Conference, Friday, April 4 - Saturday, April 5

University of Michigan-Flint, Flint, Michigan 48502-2186
(Co-sponsored by the Women's and Gender Studies Program and the Women's Center)

CALL FOR PAPERS, PANEL DISCUSSIONS, WORKSHOPS AND EXHIBITS

Conference theme:

WOMEN AND IMMIGRATION

The program committee invites proposals broadly related to the theme of the conference, "Women and Immigration." Papers may be written from any disciplinary or multi-disciplinary perspective and address women and immigration in any part of the world. We especially invite proposals on areas such as the following:

- the testimonies of women immigrants
- women, immigration, literature and the arts
- the politics of immigration and immigrants' rights
- women immigrants in economies
- women immigrant workers in the service sector and domestic work
- immigration and sexuality
- women and seasonal migration
- impacts of immigration on indigenous and receiving communities
- women immigrants' voluntary associations
- women, immigration, and the family
- the historiography of immigration
- women, immigration, and religious practices

We encourage proposals from students, community activists, and academics. Proposals should not exceed one page in length and should include the title and type of presentation, name (s) and affiliation (s) of presenter (s), and a brief description of the proposed presentation. If you would like to chair a panel of papers, please send your name, affiliation, and description of your interests.

DEADLINE FOR PROPOSALS: JANUARY 15, 1997. (FINAL PAPERS DUE MARCH 1, 1997)

SEND PROPOSALS TO: **HELENA GALLENBECK, WOMEN'S CENTER**
UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN-FLINT
303 E. KEARSLEY STREET
FLINT, MI 48502-2186

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION: PHONE (810) 766-6714